

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION “HOT ISSUES” INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: *Office of Strategic Communication (OSC) - Regional and Central Office Functions and Skills Differences*

1. BACKGROUND:

OSC consolidated a large number of employees from the regions in 2014. Those employees were previously reporting to, and largely hired by, Regional leadership. Their responsibilities and duties were vastly different than what central office communicators were delivering. To help balance our approach and leverage the skills of the entire office, we need to ensure our employees are performing tasks that fall within the scope of their position descriptions and the vision of leadership.

a. General Background:

- Regional leaders were used to having full control over their communications staff. As a result, in addition to supporting key in-scope activities, many employees were tasked with functions and roles that were esoteric to the region.
- The current OSC Associate Administrator has met with regional leaders and HSSO leaders to establish expectations around the services that OSC staff will provide.
 - Additional consultation and communications will be required to earn and maintain our clients' trust
- Performance measures (data-driven) and regular client meetings will assist in showing OSC's value and helping to build trust between our office and clients.
- The refocus and restructure accounts for our regional employees, and they, like everyone else, will be a strategic partner to their clients, supporting the agency's highest priorities through effective and continuously improved communication.
- In regional offices, there will likely be critical projects managed at the regional level (for instance, the \$750 million modernization of the San Ysidro Land Port of Entry in San Diego, CA.)

b. Issues:

- The varying ways that regional leaders define communication support have led to long-standing expectations which, in some cases, may become out of scope for OSC's focus.
- Our goal, which we see as coming out of the purposes of the consolidation, was to optimize the communication function agency-wide and devote these resources to where they can provide the most value. We believe that is through strategic communication support of the agency's highest priorities. Most of GSA's initiatives do not have consistent and strategic communication support.

- As we focus on this mission and supporting agency priorities, staff will need to prioritize their activities and may minimize or withdraw support for historic tasks. In some cases, this may mean there is something the agency no longer chooses to support. In other cases, there may be tasks that are still needed, but are not part of what's provided by (in time) an optimized and focused communication office.
- As we are making this transition, we will be assessing what needs to be done to determine the best way to accomplish the critical functions which may no longer be done by communication professionals.

2. SCOPE AND EFFECT:

a. Impact on GSA's Customers:

- The outcome of the change will allow for greater integration of communications staff across the country, allowing for improved service delivery (able to access the best resources across the agency not just the region) as well as more efficient service delivery (having a local 'client manager' who is closely tied to regional leadership and better understands their needs and priorities.)
- However, in the near-term, regional offices and leaders may find frustration in not having staff available to perform out-of-scope activities.

b. Impact on the Private Sector and State & Local Governments:

- There will be no impact on external stakeholders or clients.

3. ACTION(S) PLANNED OR REQUIRED:

Clarify the role and function of regional communication professionals and teams.

- As this transition occurs, continue to identify functions which will/will not be supported by communication staff.
- Work with regional leadership to prioritize and assign historic tasks with may no longer fit within the role/functions of communication staff.
- Provide standard procedures/processes to regional leadership to support smooth transition of activities.

4. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTEREST:

Regional Leadership (New Regional Administrators and Regional Commissioners)

5. FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018 BUDGET IMPACT:

There will be no direct impact on the 2017/18 budget..